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8 April 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**SUBJECT: Selection of Areas Considered Most Feasible
for Unconventional Warfare Purposes**

BACKGROUND

At the present time there exists considerable diversity of opinion as to what actually constitutes an unconventional warfare area. A basic factor which contributes to the lack of standardization is the fact that Unconventional Warfare as a field actually embraces three distinct and different activities - Guerrilla warfare, Subversion and Evasion and Escape. Within the three services differences in composition and mission have led to development of unilateral concepts for specific aspects of Unconventional Warfare which are of major concern to each respective service.

The Department of the Army with primacy of interest in Guerrilla Warfare has concentrated on plans for the development of Special Force components designed to be employed in enemy areas to carry out UW missions. Primary mission is Guerrilla Warfare and the recruiting organizing and employing of indigenous forces. The end objective is to establish maximum possible control of indigenous areas. Secondary mission will be to develop a capability to support evasion and escape activities.

The Department of the Air Force with primacy of interest in Evasion and Escape has concentrated on plans, procedures and support designed to deny downed aircrew to the enemy and to accomplish eventual recovery of such personnel.

The Department of the Navy also with a major interest in Evasion and Escape has proceeded along lines similar to the USAF.

This Memorandum, drafted by AFCH, has been coordinated and informally approved by Col. Dixon, Chief of the UW Division for the Army and by [REDACTED] of CIA. This Memorandum will constitute the written guidance or frame of reference when the requirement for the feasibility study is given to ORE/GR.

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Through the unified commands the respective service components have placed upon CIA requirements for development of clandestine assets to perform various types of missions such as E and F support, sabotage and reception of Army Special Force teams.

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Although it is evident that all of the various UW activities discussed above must begin with the selection and designation of specific geographical areas, the basic differences in UW objectives of the individual services have resulted in differences in criteria on which area selection has been made.

PURPOSE

The purpose of obtaining a feasibility study of all countries of interest is to achieve, whenever possible, standardization and compatibility of area selection to meet the UW needs of the respective services. It has been determined that two primary types of areas are required. These are:

- a. Areas suitable and feasible for use as multi-purpose UW base areas.
- b. Areas suitable and feasible for use as refuge areas for personnel isolated in enemy territory.

It is recognized that accomplishment of a feasibility study to establish a coordinated list of recommended areas of the two types indicated above is only the first step of a series of actions which will be required.

Subsequent actions, not in order of priority, are as follows:

- a. Coordinated dissemination of the results of the study and appropriate explanation to operational military commands and CIA staff elements.
- b. Service action to obtain and disseminate further intelligence on specific areas accepted for use. (This should include selection of Drop Zones, beach landing sites, etc.) It is possible that this action may also be more appropriate for joint CIA/military effort.
- c. Alignment of service plans to utilize most feasible areas.
- d. Selection and analysis of additional UW operational areas required for expansion and full utilization of initial base areas.
- e. Review and re-alignment of Unified Command requirements placed on CIA to take maximum advantage of possible areas. This action should be accomplished by the Unified Commands.
- f. Re-appraisal of CIA acceptance of Unified Command requirements for development of clandestine assets.

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It is emphasized that it is impractical to take operational factors into consideration during the initial feasibility study. In order to establish a common basis from which the subsequent actions indicated above can develop in a logical and orderly manner it is first necessary to accomplish a preliminary feasibility study to determine which areas are the most suitable for UW purposes.

Criteria for Area Selection.

1. Applicable to both Unconventional Warfare Multi-purpose Base Areas and Evasion and Escape Refuges (SAFE) areas.

a. Areas of reasonable size which can be clearly delimited and identified on World geographical charts scale 1:1,000,000.

b. Terrain which will permit initial entry of UW forces or isolated personnel, by air, sea or overland movement (whichever is appropriate to the general region of interest).

c. Terrain and concealment possibilities which will permit reasonable freedom of initial movement by UW forces or isolated personnel.

d. General lack of organized security forces of sufficient strength to prevent initial entry of personnel and initiation of UW operations.

e. Subsistence possibilities (it is recognized that it may be necessary in many instances to accept areas which offer only marginal subsistence possibilities).

f. Low population density.

g. Existence of dissident elements which are known or appear to be inclined to either active or passive resistance to communist controls, doctrine and existing governmental structure.

h. General lack of transportation and communication nets which could facilitate entry and control of the area by enemy security forces.

i. Considerations of the impact of weather factors such as extreme cold, deep snow, or flooding of large sections either in or near the area, which would prevent or seriously hinder the survival and movement of isolated personnel and/or UW forces.

2. Specifically applicable to Unconventional Warfare Multi-purpose Base Areas.

a. Availability of terrain within the area suitable for use as Drop Zones for initial entry and subsequent air resupply.

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b. Operational proximity (varying in terms of terrain to be crossed, climatic factors, intervening obstructions, etc.) to Unconventional Warfare type targets.

c. Near enough to populated areas to permit movement of UW forces from initial base areas to areas in which indigenous population could be contacted and utilized for subsequent and expanded Unconventional Warfare operations.

3. Specifically applicable to Evasion and Escape Refuge (SAFE) areas.

a. Not located near major built up areas. In general, the distance to built up areas should not be less than 60 to 80 nautical miles. The desirable distances given are not rigid and when this criteria can not be met it will be necessary to accept areas closer to potential targets. Only in extreme cases will it be feasible to accept areas closer than 25 to 30 nautical miles from built up areas.

b. Whenever practicable, consideration should be given to selecting areas which contain, or are relatively near one or more of the following:

(1) Terrain suitable for landing and take off of light and/or medium type aircraft.

(2) Inland waters suitable for landing and take off of amphibious aircraft.

(3) Beach areas suitable for recovery of personnel by small boats or submarines.

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